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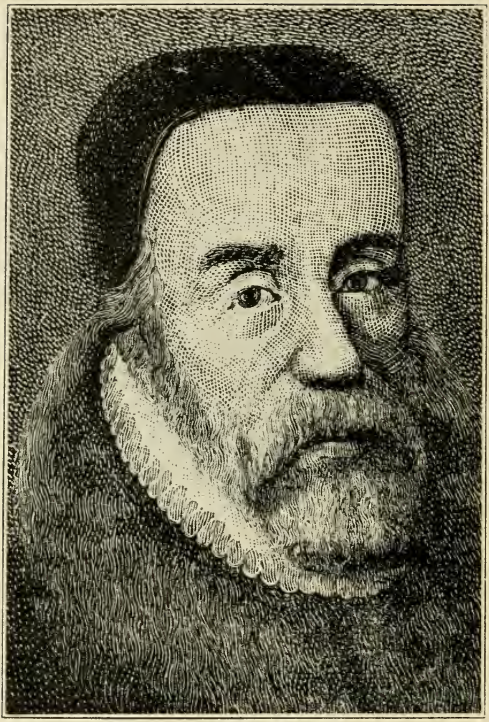

Painting in Hertford College, Oxford

WILLIAM TYNDALE

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William Tyndale

The Translator of the English Bible

William Dallmann

Fourth Edition, Revised

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WILLIAM TYNDALE

CHAPTER ONE

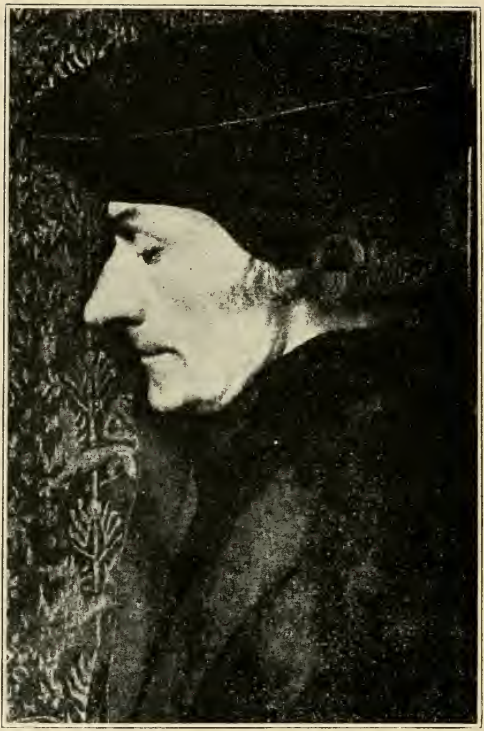
TYNDALE'S LIFE IN ENGLAND

1. Tyndale at School

William Tyndale was born about 1494 in Gloucestershire, near Wales.

About 1506 he went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and became Bachelor of Arts July 4, 1512, and Master of Arts July 2, 1515.

Tyndale read the Greek New Testament with students of the college. Grocyn had learned Greek in Italy and was the first to teach it in Oxford in 1492. But the party of the "Trojans" opposed the study of Greek. One of the colleges had forbidden the entrance of the Greek New Testament within its walls "by horse or by boat, by wheels or on foot." Richard Croke, professor of Greek at Leipzig, came back to Cambridge in 1518 to teach Greek. About 1519 Tyndale went to Cambridge, where Erasmus was teaching Greek and editing his Greek New Testament. In 1520 the magnificent Wolsey made his triumphal visit to Cambridge and was greeted with a most fulsome eulogy.



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ERASMUS

Early next year Luther's works were burned at Paul's Cross in London, and at the Easter term they were burned at Cambridge — the cost for "drinks," etc., was two shillings.

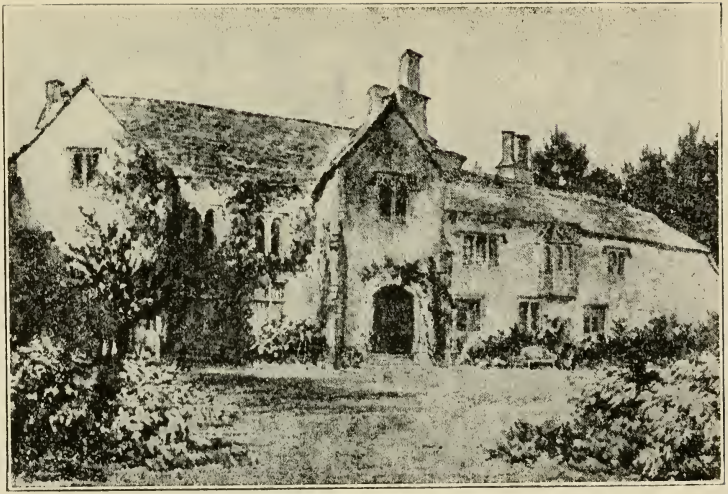
2. Tyndale a Tutor

About 1522 we find Tyndale as tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh at Little Sudbury, in Gloucestershire, twelve miles northeast of Bristol, who had been the king's champion at the coronation of Henry VIII.

"The continuous stream of Lutheran literature" began to pour into English seaports in 1521. Lutheran books, though rigorously prohibited, were probably not unknown amongst the imports that floated up the Avon to the warehouses of the Bristol merchants. "There was talk of learning as well of Luther and Erasmus Roterodamus as of opinions in the Scriptures. The said Master Tyndale being learned and which had been a student of divinity in Cambridge, and did many times therein shew his mind and learning." Sir John kept a good table, and the clergy were often invited. Tyndale had an uncomfortable way of crushing his opponents by clinching his arguments with chapter and verse of the Bible. As a result

they began to hate him and stayed away from the good dinners of Master Walsh rather than have the "sour sauce" of Tyndale's arguments. The clergy were very ignorant. A visitation at Salisbury in 1222 showed five out of seventeen clergymen could not translate the words of consecration of the Mass. Nearly three hundred years later Archbishop Warham complained the Canterbury monks "are wholly ignorant of what they read" in the divine service. A generation later, in the reign of Edward VI, Bishop Hooper of Gloucester examined 311 clergy; of these 168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, 31 could not tell where they came from, 40 were unable to repeat the Lord's Prayer, about 40 could not name the author.

In 1408 Archbishop Arundel had the Convocation of Canterbury expressly forbid any man to translate any part of the Scriptures into English or to read such translation without authority of the bishop, an authority not likely to be granted. The Bible was not even a part of the preparatory study of the preachers. Writing against Alexander Alesius to James V of Scotland, Cochlaeus, the notorious Romish theologian, says: "The



HOME OF SIR JOHN WALSH

New Testament translated into the language of the people is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the veil of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!"

In 1529 Latimer, at Cambridge, in his two famous "Sermons on the Card," urged the translation and universal reading of the Bible. Prior Buckenham objected in a sermon on "Christmas Dice": "Where Scriptrue saith, 'No man that layeth his hand to the plough and looketh back is meet for the kingdom of God,' will not the ploughman, when he readeth these words, be apt forthwith to cease from his plough, and then where will be the sowing and harvest? Likewise, also, whereas the baker readeth, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' will he not forthwith be too sparing in the use of leaven, to the great injury of our health? And so, also, when the simple man

JOHN COCHLAEUS

reads the words 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee,' incontinent he will pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be full of blind men, to the great decay of the nation and the manifest loss of the king's grace. And thus, by reading of Holy Scriptures, will the whole kingdom be in confusion." (Demaus, *Life of Latimer,* p. 77.)

"Some years before the rise of the Lutheran heresy there was in morals no discipline, in sacred literature no erudition, in divine things no reverence; religion was almost extinct," are the words of Cardinal Bellarmine.

So it need not surprise us that Tyndale was soon suspected of heresy when he always proved his points with the Bible. The outspoken young scholar caused many an uneasy hour to Lady Walsh, who would remind him that bishops and abbots having an income of hundreds of pounds yearly held views the very opposite of his; and "were it reason, think you, that we should believe you before them?" Of course it was difficult for a moneyless young scholar to answer such an argument from such a source. In order to strengthen his position with his

wavering hostess by the testimony of Erasmus, whose fame was resounding through Europe, Tyndale translated his *Handbook of a Christian Soldier,* and Sir John Walsh and his lady were won over to his opinions, and the clergy were no more invited.

3. Tyndale Preaches

Tyndale often preached in the near-by little church of St. Adeline and even on St. Austin's Green of Bristol. His preaching was fiercely attacked by the clergy. "These blind and rude priests, flocking together to the ale-house, — for that was their preaching-place, — raged and railed against him, affirming that his sayings were heresy, adding moreover unto his sayings, of their own heads, more than ever he spake."

4. Tyndale is Tried

Tyndale was secretly accused to Chancellor John Bell, and preparations to condemn him were quietly made. Summoned to appear, Tyndale went, though fearing that evil was intended, and "prayed in his mind heartily to God to strengthen him to stand fast in the truth of His Word." "When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously and reviled me and rated me

as though I had been a dog." But Tyndale's defense seems to have been ably conducted, for he left the court neither branded as a heretic nor even forced to swear off anything; "folk were glad to take all to the best," as Sir Thomas More wrote.

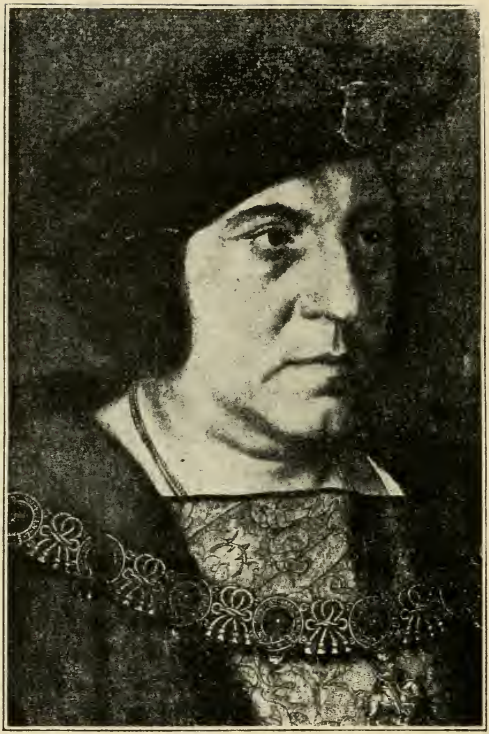
5. Tyndale Does Some Thinking

Tyndale thought long and hard why the clergy should oppose so violently the opinions taken from the Bible and in his doubts consulted "a certain doctor that had been an old chancellor before to a bishop," probably William Latimer, the Oxford Humanist. His doubts were resolved in a most unexpected manner. "Do you not know," said the Doctor, "that the Pope is the very Antichrist which the Scripture speaketh of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life. I have been an officer of his, but I have given it up and defy him and all his works."

Convinced of this, Tyndale was also convinced that, to save the Church, the common people must have the Bible in their own tongue. He was no dreamer or fanatic; with a clear eye he saw the seat of trouble,

and with a glowing heart and firm will he set about to seek the only remedy. "I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text." "In this they be all agreed, to drive you from the knowledge of the Scripture and that ye shall not have the text thereof in the mother tongue and to keep the world still in darkness, to the intent they might sit in the consciences of the people through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts, their proud ambition, and unsatiable covetousness and to exalt their own honor above king and emperor, yea, above God Himself, . . . which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament."

"Communing and disputing," says Fox, "with a certain learned man, he drove him to that issue that the learned man said, 'We were better to be without God's laws than the Pope's.' Master Tyndale hearing that, answered him, 'I defy the Pope and all his laws,' and added, 'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture



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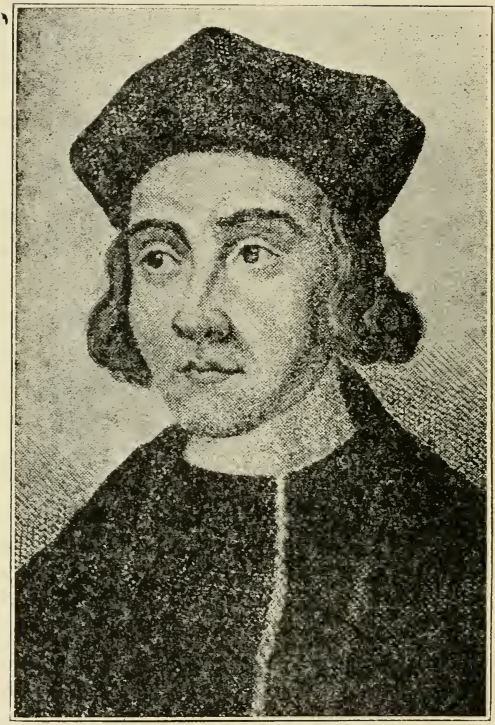
SIR HARRY GUILDFORD

than thou doest.'" This became known; the priests waxed fiercer in their opposition; they charged him with heresy; they hinted at burning him.

6. Tyndale Goes to London

With an introduction to Sir John's friend, Sir Harry Guildford, Controller of the Royal Household, Tyndale in 1523 went to London to see the new bishop, Cuthbert Tunstal, whom Erasmus had praised for his love of learning. As proof of his scholarship Tyndale took with him "an oration of Isocrates which I had translated out of greke in to English."

Two years before Tyndale's arrival in London it was discovered that Luther's books had been imported in such numbers that Wolsey required all to deliver up the works of the arch-heretic to the church authorities; yet the books were brought in by the merchants who traded with the Low Countries. Henry himself, who loved theological controversy and prided himself on his orthodoxy, had written against Luther and been rewarded for his zeal by the title of "Defender of the Faith," still fondly cherished as the most honorable of all the distinctions of the English sovereigns.



BISHOP TUNSTAL

The example of the king was, of course, followed by the clergy; the pulpits resounded with fierce denunciations of the "detestable and damnable heresies" of that "child of the devil" who had ventured to resist the authority of the Pope. The attention of Parliament was directed to the reported spread of Lutheranism in the University of Cambridge, and it was proposed to search the suspected colleges, which, however, Wolsey forbade.

Until he could see Tunstal, Tyndale preached in St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, corner of the Strand and Fleet Street, and greatly impressed Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy, educated, and traveled cloth merchant, later an alderman and a sheriff, who lived near the Tower. Tyndale gained the sympathy of the generous merchant, who himself had begun "to be a Scripture-man" and whose special pleasure it was to assist needy scholars.

Tunstal accorded an interview to Tyndale, acknowledged the scholarship of the stranger, but said his house was full and advised the young man to seek a place elsewhere.

"The priest came to me again," says

Monmouth, "and besought me to help him; and so I took him into my house half a year; and there he lived like a good priest, as methought. He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book; and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will and drink but small single beer. I never saw him wear linen about him in the space he was with me. I did promise him ten pounds sterling to pray for my father and mother their souls and all Christian souls." For this kindness to Tyndale, Monmouth was imprisoned in the Tower. Sir Thomas More, while fiercely fighting Tyndale's doctrines, admits that "before he went over the sea, he was well known for a man of right good living, studious and well learned in the Scripture, and looked and preached holily."

Monmouth bought and studied the works of Luther and had all the usual marks of the "detestable sect of Lutherans." Hitherto Tyndale "seems to have looked up to Erasmus as the great light and guide of the age and the true reformer of religion; now he heard of a greater Reformer, whose words of more impressive eloquence, and, still more, whose conduct of more resolute determination, had achieved what Erasmus

had rather recommended than attempted. . . . There can be no question that from this time onwards Luther occupied the highest place in his esteem and exercised very considerable influence over his opinions," says Demaus.

Tyndale saw men led to prison and to death for having Luther's writings, and he knew well a Bible translation would be still more dangerous. At last the simple-minded scholar "understood not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also, that there was no place to do it in all England." Tyndale was not the man to put his hand to the plow and then draw back; if only a life of exile could do the work, a life of exile he would accept. "To give the people the bare text of Scripture, he would offer his body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death His Grace [Henry VIII] would, so that this be obtained."

CHAPTER TWO

TYNDALE'S WORK IN GERMANY

About May, 1524, Tyndale sailed to Hamburg, unto "poverty, mine exile out of mine natural country, and bitter absence from my friends, the hunger, the thirst, the cold, the great danger wherewith I was everywhere compassed, the innumerable other hard and sharp fightings which I had to endure."

1. Tyndale at Wittenberg

Wittenberg was "the common asylum of all apostates," as Duke George of Saxony styled it; "the little town which had suddenly become the sacred city of the Reformation," as Green puts it, rightly; for Scultetus says of certain travelers, "as they came in sight of the town, they returned thanks to God with clasped hands, for from Wittenberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, the light of evangelical truth had spread to the uttermost parts of the earth."

"Guillelmus Daltici ex Anglia" registered at Wittenberg on May 27, 1524 — none other than William Tyndale. On the 30th we find the name of Matthias von Emersen of Hamburg, nephew of widow Margaret von Emer-

sen, who entertained Tyndale. "Guilhelmus Roy ex Londino" registered on June 10, 1525 — William Roy, Tyndale's helper.

At Wittenberg, Tyndale "had conference with Luther and other learned men in those parts," Fox says. Free from danger, Tyndale settled down to his life-work. He used the 1522, third, edition of Erasmus's Greek New Testament and "systematically consulted" Luther's German New Testament. Froude says Tyndale translated under Luther's "immediate direction," and Green speaks of "Tyndale's Lutheran translation."

2. Tyndale at Cologne

In the spring of 1525 Tyndale went to Hamburg to send to Monmouth for the ten pounds left with him, and at the same time he sent "a little treatise," Bugenhagen's *Letter to the English?*

Hans Collenbeck brought the money, and Tyndale and Roy went to Cologne, where Peter Quentel was to print three thousand copies.

John Cochlaeus, whom the papists call "the scourge of Luther," was in Cologne and heard the printers boast that all England in a short time would become Lutheran.

"Inviting, therefore, some printers to his lodgings, after they were excited with wine, one of them in private conversation disclosed to him the secret by which England was to be drawn over to the party of Luther, *viz.*, that there were at that very time in the press 3,000 copies of the Lutheran New Testament, translated into the English language, and that they had advanced as far as the letter K in the order of the sheets." These are Tyndale's "Matthew and Mark," of which we read.

Cochlaeus got Hermann Rinck, a senator of Cologne, well known to the Emperor and the King of England, to procure the order to stop the printing, and the King, Cardinal Wolsey, and Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, were warned by Cochlaeus to keep a sharp lookout in all the seaports of England "to prevent the importation of the pernicious merchandise."

3. Tyndale at Worms

About October, 1525, Tyndale fled to Worms, "full of the rage of Lutheranism," according to Cochlaeus, and Peter Schoeffer printed three thousand octavo Testaments.

Tyndale's New Testament is often called

"Luther's New Testament in English." Why? 1. Compare Luther's German Testament of September, 1522, with Tyndale's English Testament of 1525, and it is clear at a glance that Tyndale's is Luther's in miniature: the appearance of the page, the arrangement of the text, the inner margin for the references and the outer one for the explanations, the "pestilent glosses"—all are the same. 2. The "pestilent glosses," as Henry VIII called them, or marginal notes of Tyndale's, are literally taken from Luther or reproduced from Luther; some are original with Tyndale. 3. The translation is from the original Greek, but Luther's was used systematically. 4. In Tyndale's prolog many passages have been borrowed from Luther, "as the reader speedily begins to suspect from the characteristic ring of the sentences." Two pages are taken almost word for word from Luther. A comparison of the two "fully justifies the assertion that he reproduced in English Luther's German Testament," as the *Athenaeum* says.

Dr. Edward Lee, the King's almoner, on December 2, 1525, wrote Henry VIII from Bordeaux: "An Englishman, at the solicitation and instance of Luther, with whom he

is, hath translated the New Testament into English and within a few days intendeth to return with the same imprinted into England. I need not to advertise Your Grace what infection and danger may ensue hereby if it be not withstanded. This is the next [nearest] way to fulfil [fill full] your realm with Lutherans. For all Luther's opinions be grounded upon bare words of Scripture. . . . All our forefathers, governors of the Church of England, have with all diligence forbid English Bibles. . . . The integrity of the Christian faith within your realm cannot long endure if these books may come in."

In vain all warnings. Early in 1526 both editions were smuggled into England in bales of cloth and in sacks of flour. "It came as part of the Lutheran movement; it bore the Lutheran stamp in its version of ecclesiastical words," writes Green. It seems the Hansa merchants brought the books to their house, the Steelyard, on the Thames Embankment, and then to All Hallows' Church in Honey Lane. From here they were spread by Dr. Fornan and his curate, Thomas Garret.

"The first Religious Tract Society," as

Green calls them, were the "Christian Brethren," a society formed to spread Tyndale's New Testament and Luther's writings, the first English Lutheran Men's Club or Publicity Bureau.

George Herman, an Englishman of Antwerp, in 1526 sold the New Testaments to Simon Fish, a lawyer, who sold them to Robert Necton, many of them, at sundry times, five or ten at a time. Necton sold seven in Suffolk "for 7 or 8 groats apiece," and others in London. Richard Bayfield bought two unbound for 3s. 4d. At divers times he sold 15 or 16 to Constantine.

About May, John Pykas, a baker of Colchester, "bought a New Testament in English, and paid for it four shillings, which New Testament he kept and read it through many times," as he testified on trial before Tunstal, March 7, 1528, in the chapel of that very palace where Tyndale had in vain asked the bishop's patronage.

At Michaelmas, 1526, John Tyball of Steeple Bumstead in Essex and Thomas Hilles bought in London from Robert Barnes two testaments at 3s. 2d. each, and he showed the book to the curate of the village.

On March 15, 1528, Tunstal writes Wolsey during the past year Theodoric, a Dutchman of Antwerp, had twice brought "many testaments in English."

John Raimund, or Endhoven, supplied over 700 English New Testaments to bookseller Francis Byrkman.

In the summer, Standish, bishop of St. Asaph, got hold of a copy and brought it to Cardinal Wolsey; it was resolved that the English New Testament should be publicly burned wherever discovered. In September Tunstal, at Paul's Cross, condemned the New Testament to be burned; in October he called it the work of "many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith," and he warned all to deliver up their English Testaments; yet he confessed in his diocese the New Testaments were "thick spread."

On November 21 Cardinal Campegi at Rome wrote Wolsey he has heard with pleasure of the burning of the Bibles brought in by "the abominable sect"; nothing "could be more pleasing to Almighty God."

It was a safe business venture to reprint

Tyndale's translation, and before the end of 1526 Christopher of Endhoven pirated two thousand copies at Antwerp. Warham would put an end to the heretical book by buying it up, and he spent nearly seventy pounds (about $5,000 today) before he gave up the "gracious and blessed deed, for which God should reward him hereafter," as Bishop Nix of Norwich prayed; he also contributed ten marks (about $500 in our money) to buy and burn Bibles in 1527. Thomas Garret, a curate of London, had Tyndale's New Testament, which he sold at Oxford "to such as he knew to be lovers of the Gospel." Cardinal Wolsey arrested him and his friend Dalaber and flung the Bibles into the fire.

Sure of buyers among friends and enemies, the Dutch printers again pirated an edition of Tyndale, and London was once more supplied. In 1528 John Ruremond, a Dutchman, got into trouble by printing 1,500 of Tyndale's New Testaments and bringing 500 into England. In 1527 it was reported by many that even the king himself "wolde that they shulde have the arroneous boks"; and "marchants and such that had ther abyding not ferre from the see," were greatly infected; and that from the college

at Cambridge which sent the most priests into his diocese not one had come into Norfolk lately "but saverith of the frying pan, tho' he speke never so holely."

Coming from the Treaty of Cambray, concluded August 5, 1529, which embraced "the forbidding to print or sell any Lutheran books," Bishop Tunstal stopped over at Antwerp to seize Tyndale's New Testament. Augustine Packington offered to buy all unsold copies. "Gentle Master Packington," said the bishop, "deemyng that he hadde God by the toe, whanne in truthe he hadde, as after he thought, the devyl by the fiste, do your diligence and get them for me; and with all my heart I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you, for the books are erroneous and nought, and I intend surely to destroy them all and to burn them at Paul's Cross." And so forward went the bargain: the bishop had the books; Packington had the thanks; Tyndale had the money — to print more Bibles.

Of Tyndale's quarto fragment only a single imperfect copy remains; and of the three thousand octavo, one, incomplete, in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the other, without the title-page, in the Baptist College at

Bristol; all the rest were destroyed by the papists. It has been estimated that about 30,000 Bibles were imported into England from 1526 to 1536.

Tyndale likely studied Hebrew among the Jews at Worms, whose ancient synagog was built, according to tradition, shortly after the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. Here Tyndale met Hermann von dem Busche, who, according to Spalatin's diary under date of August, 1526, said Tyndale "was so learned in seven languages — Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French — that in whichever he spoke you would think it was his native tongue."

Before the close of 1526 Tyndale printed at Worms his famous *Prolog to the Epistle to the Romans.* Robert Ridley condemns it as "full of the most poisoned and abominable heresies that can be thought of," and Sir Thomas More attacks it for "bringing its readers into a false understanding of St. Paul." Demaus says: "Nothing could show more strikingly than this work the great ascendency which the German Reformer had now obtained over the mind of Tyndale. The *Introduction to the Romans* is in truth hardly an original work but is

much more correctly described as a translation or paraphrase of Luther's preface to the same epistle."

4. Tyndale at Marburg

In 1527 Philip of Hessen founded the first Protestant university at Marburg. One of the professors was Hermann von dem Busche, a pupil of Reuchlin, the first German Hebraist. Busch is said to be the first nobleman to forget his rank so far as to become a teacher in the schools; he was professor of poetry and oratory. He had kept up a correspondence with the Englishman, and it is supposed Tyndale went to this quiet inland city to escape persecution.

On May 8, 1528, Hans Lufft printed at "Malborow" Tyndale's *Parable of the Wicked Mammon,* a treatise on Justification by Faith. "The choice of subject may fairly enough be considered an indication of the paramount influence which Luther now exercised over the mind of Tyndale; and indeed there are several striking similarities of sentiment and expression which were most certainly suggested by the writings of the great German Reformer," says Demaus. The Archbishop of Canterbury condemned

it as "containing many detestable errors and damnable opinions"; it was also condemned by a body of prelates and doctors summoned by Henry VIII; Sir Thomas More uniformly called it "The Wicked Book of Mammon," "a very treasury and well-spring of wickedness," "a book by which many have been beguiled and brought into many wicked heresies."

At this time there appeared also at "Malborow" *The Obedience of a Christian Man.* It defends the Reformers from the charge that "they caused insurrection and taught the people to disobey their heads and governors and to rise against their princes and to make all common and to make havoc of other men's goods." In this work Tyndale charged the papists with having corrupted the Sacraments. Baptism and "the Sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ" had promises annexed to them and were therefore true Sacraments. "Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense, . . . whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way." No wonder Sir Thomas More pours out the vials of his wrath upon this

book: "He hath not only sowked out the most poison that he could find through all Luther's books, or take of him by mouth and all that hath spette out in this book, but hath also in many things far passed his master."

This book strengthened the Lutherans in England: Bilney and Bainham, for instance, repented of their recantation and bore the cruel death by fire with remarkable courage. It also gave to the Reformers a definite aim and purpose. It fell into the hands of Anne Boleyn, and through her Henry VIII read it. "This book is for me and all kings to read," he said and took into his own hands the reins of power hitherto held by Cardinal Wolsey. Wolsey founded Cardinal College, now Christ Church, at Oxford, for the purpose of opposing Lutheranism, and among his last words were for the king "to depress this new sect of Lutherans."

In 1529 Tyndale sailed from Antwerp to Hamburg, was shipwrecked, and lost everything. He came to Hamburg, lodged with widow Margaret von Emersen from March 28 till December. Here Miles Coverdale helped him get out the five books of Moses in English. By February Bugenhagen had

Holbein

HENRY VIII

established Lutheranism in Hamburg, and so Tyndale was safe there now.

Tyndale's translation of the five books of Moses was "Emprented at Malborow in the lande of Hesse by me Hans Luft the yere of our Lorde M.CCCCC.XXX. the XVII dayes of Januarij." Tyndale followed Lotter's edition of Luther's translation, though not with the "slavish deference of a copyist, as he is sometimes said to have done." In the glosses "the spirit and even the style of Luther is distinctly visible," says Westcott. "Perhaps it would have been better if Tyndale had in this matter more closely followed his German predecessor; for the greatest of Tyndale's admirers must admit that his keen sarcasms are by no means so suitable an accompaniment to the sacred text as Luther's topographical and expository notes," says Demaus. Some called him "nothing more than an English echo of the great German heresiarch." "Those best acquainted with the theology of the English Reformation will be the first to admit that we shall look in vain in Cranmer, Latimer, or Ridley for any such clearness of apprehension and precision as here displayed by Tyndale."

In May, 1530, Bishop Nix of Norwich begged the king to kill the rumor he favored the New Testament; otherwise he could not check the growing Lutheranism in his diocese. The king called some thirty divines to Westminster, and on the 24th they condemned the free circulation of Old or New Testament. The next day the king in the Star Chamber said it was not necessary for the commons to have the Bible in English; at present it would only do harm. Within fifteen days all copies were to be given up to the church officers. In the same month Tunstal made another big bonfire of New Testaments and other Lutheran books. From the Reichstag at Augsburg Cardinal Campegi on June 28 wrote King Henry so worthy a deed added great glory to his name.

Six months later Latimer wrote the king three or four of the divines had favored the English Bible but were overborne by the majority.

In November Tyndale's brother John, Thomas Patmore, and a young man living near London Bridge were jailed by Chancellor Thomas More for "receiving of Tyndale's testaments and divers other books and delivering and scattering the same." Each

of them was set upon a horse, and their faces to the horse's tail, and paraded to the Standard in Chepe, where they threw their said books into a great fire. They were fined, Patmore 100 pounds.

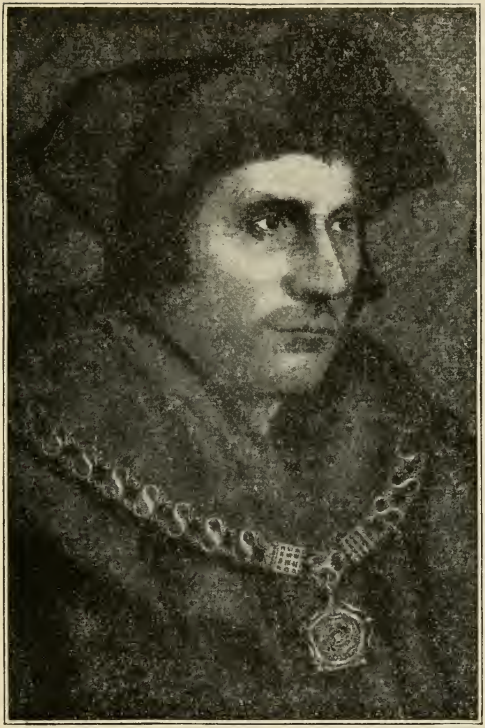
Early in March Tyndale's friend Thomas Hitton was burned. His soul went "straight from the short fire to the fire eternal. . . . The devil's stinking martyr," writes St. Sir Thomas More.

In August little Bilney perished in the flames.

Richard Bayfield of Cambridge three times brought great loads of New Testaments into England, also five of Luther's works, five of Melanchthon's, four of Brenz's, three of Bugenhagen's, and others. In November Sir Thomas More seized a load. About Easter, 1531, he was betrayed by George Constantine and burned on December 4.

John Tewkesbury, a leather merchant, perished in the same month in the same manner for the same offense.

In January, 1532, Thomas Dusgate, or Benet, a graduate of Cambridge, was burned. In March Hugh Latimer was arrested. Through one Hacker over hundred Bible-readers were punished.



Holbein

THOMAS MORE

The bitterest of all Tyndale's writings is his *Practice of Prelates,* a sort of historical summary of the "practices" by which Pope and clergy gradually grew up from poverty and humility into that universal supremacy enjoyed by them in Tyndale's time.

On March 7, 1528, Bishop Tunstal licensed Sir Thomas More, his "Demosthenes," to read the books of Lutheran heresy and reply to them. More attacked "the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale" in his *Dialogue* and in 1531 Tyndale printed in Amsterdam his *Answer* in defense of the Reformation. More felt constrained to reply in his *Confutation* in May, 1532, and the work of opposing Tyndale kept him busy till the day of his death: in all he wrote about one thousand folio pages against the Reformer. The *Confutation* is extremely tedious and virulent — "Not to speak of the ribald abuse poured forth in season and out of season upon Luther, the language applied to Tyndale is altogether unpardonable," says Demaus.

A few years before Tyndale had left England poor and unknown; now his fame resounded through all England. Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, chief legal adviser of Henry VIII at a most mo-

mentous crisis in English history, felt compelled to write against Tyndale. What stronger proof of Tyndale's power could be asked? According to Anthony Wood, More was "one of the greatest prodigies of wit and learning that England ever before his time had produced," and Tyndale entered the arena against him and in several important points remained master of the field. More had vowed, "I shall leave Tyndale never a dark corner to creep into able to hide his head in." Now he had to confess, "Men thought his *Confutation* overlong and therefore tedious to read," a sad confession that the great wit of the age and chancellor of the realm had gotten the worst of the controversy.

In 1532 *The Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* was printed, the ablest of Tyndale's expository works. George Joy says that in reality "Luther made it, Tyndale only but translating and powdering it here and there with his own fantasies." "The coincidences between Tyndale's *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* and that of Luther, though fewer, are even more worthy of notice" than usual, says Westcott. This great scholar also speaks of the "profound

influence which Luther exerted upon his [Tyndale's] writings generally. The extent to which Tyndale silently incorporated free or even verbal translations of passages from Luther's works in his own has escaped the notice of his editors. . . . Tyndale's *Prolog* to his quarto Testament, his first known writing, almost at the beginning introduces a large fragment from Luther's *Preface to the New Testament.* There is indeed a ring in the opening words which might have led any one familiar with Luther's style to suspect their real source."

When the plague visited Germany in 1530 and carried off Francis Lambert of the Marburg University, a devoted friend of Tyndale, the Englishman left Marburg and went to Antwerp.

CHAPTER THREE

TYNDALE'S DEATH IN HOLLAND

On June 18, 1528, Wolsey ordered Ambassador John Hackett to have the ringleaders of the English Lutherans abroad arrested. The English merchant Richard Herman, a citizen of Antwerp, was jailed, but Tyndale escaped. Friars John West and Flegh and senator Hermann Rinck of Koeln also failed to find Tyndale.

In November, 1530, Cromwell sent Stephen Vaughan to get Tyndale to come back to England. The reformer refused; he did not trust the king's promises. Any wonder? Tyndale's learned friend William Tracy, in his will of October 5, 1530, confessed his belief in salvation through Christ alone, rejected all other mediators, would bestow no money for the buying of prayers for his soul. His body was dug up and burned!

The new ambassador to the kaiser, Sir Thomas Elyot, was ordered to take Tyndale forcibly and send him to England for punishment. Easily said, not easily done. More tells Erasmus that Tyndale, "the heretic of our land, is in exile both nowhere and everywhere." With Cranmer at the Reichstag at

Holbein

SIR THOMAS ELYOT

Regensburg in 1532, Elyot writes Norfolk on March 14, as Tyndale "is in wit movable, semblably so is his person uncertain to come by."

Richard Herman was jailed for eight months 1528—9 for supporting Tyndale and helping "to the setting forth of the New Testament in English." In 1534 he begged Queen Anne Boleyn to be restored to his privileges. On May 14 the queen asked Cromwell to restore him.

In November, 1534, came the revised second edition of the New Testament — "Tyndale's noblest monument." The prologs and glosses "have to a considerable extent been translated from the German of Luther."

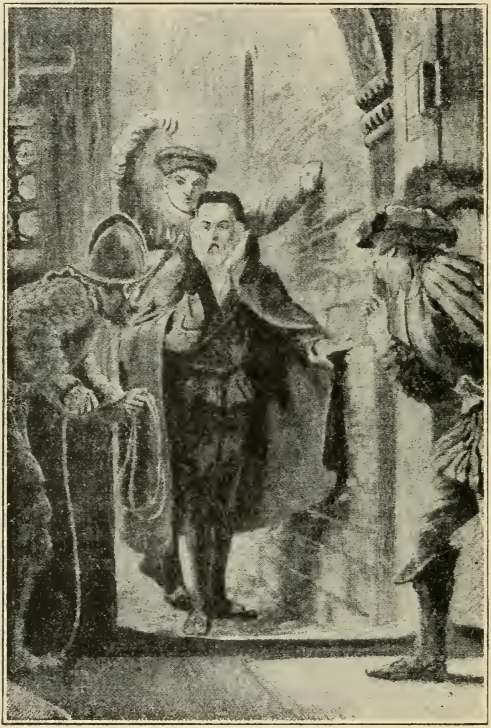
An edition de luxe, printed on vellum, with capitals and woodcuts illuminated, on its gold edges inscribed in red paint, one on each face, the three words *Anna Regina Angliae,* was gratefully sent to the queen.

Ever since the middle of 1534 Tyndale had found a home with Thomas Poyntz at Antwerp in "The English House," granted to the English merchants with special privileges as far back as 1474. Tyndale also practiced what he preached: justification produced sanctification. "He reserved for

CHARLES V

himself two days in the week which he named his days of pastime, namely, Monday and Saturday." One was devoted to relieving English refugees; on the other "he walked round about the town, seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor person to dwell, and where he found any to be well occupied and yet overburdened with children or else aged or weak, those also he plentifully relieved; and thus he spent his two days of pastime."

Rigorous laws were passed year after year to check the progress of Lutheran doctrines. In October, 1529, Charles V ordained that the "reading, purchasing, or possessing any proscribed books or any New Testaments prohibited by the theologians of Louvain, attendance at any meeting of heretics, disputing about Holy Scripture, want of due respect to the images of God and the Saints" were crimes for which "men were to be beheaded, women buried alive, and the relapsed burnt." In spite of these terrible measures, Lutheranism continued to make rapid progress; the Emperor in revenge issued fresh edicts, more severe than before. Informers were encouraged by a share in the confiscated goods of all con-

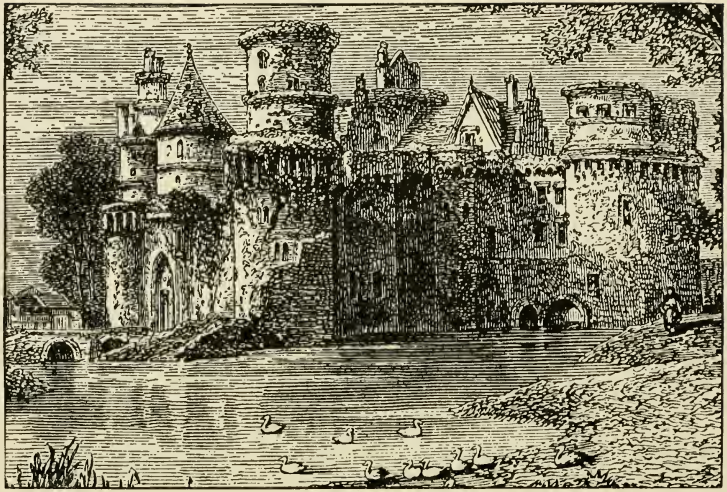


TYNDALE BETRAYED

victed heretics, and lest the officials should be mild, all who were remiss were punished. The inquisition had full authority to seize all suspected persons, to torture, to execute, without appeal from their sentence; and these tyrannical powers they exercised with relentless cruelty. Charles V was not one whit less ferocious than his son Philip II.

From these bloody measures Tyndale was safe in the "English House"; outside he had no protection. His enemies thirsted for his blood.

Henry Philips, a smooth, treacherous villain, came over and won the confidence of the simple-minded scholar, who lent him forty shillings. The plans being ripe, the Judas Philips invited the translator out to dinner and then arrested him through the Emperor's attorney, brought from Brussels, and put him in charge of Adolph Van Wesele, Lieutenant of the Castle of Vilvorde, the great state prison of the Low Countries, May 23 or 24, 1535. So skilful, secret, and prompt had been the arrest that probably no one knew of it till the Emperor's Procureur-General, the terrible Pierre Dufief, came to search Tyndale's chamber and carry off his books, papers, and other effects.

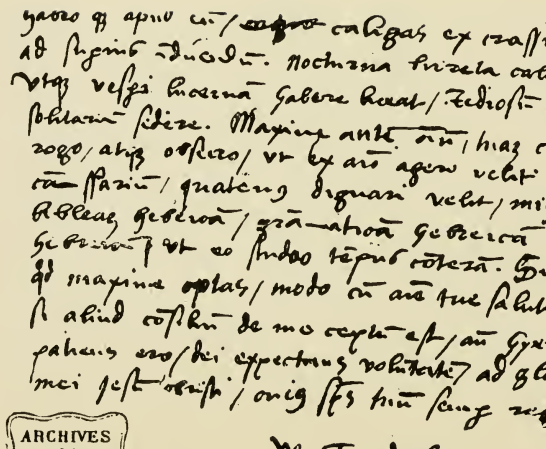


CASTLE OF VILVORDE

The English merchants, aggrieved by the loss of an esteemed friend and by this treacherous assault on their rights and privileges, wrote to the Queen Regent, Mary of Hungary, entreating her to release Tyndale. King Henry VIII and Cromwell were appealed to, and Cromwell, with the king's consent, wrote to Carondolet, Archbishop of Palermo, and the Marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom, two of the most influential members of the Imperial Government. Poyntz delivered the letters, suffered labor, loss, imprisonment, risked his life for his friend; but it was in vain.

As Paul in prison converted the jailer of Philippi, so Tyndale in prison converted the keeper, his daughter, and others of his household; and the rest that became acquainted with him said that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust. Even the Procureur-General called him "a learned, good, and godly man."

A single Latin letter, written to the Governor of the Castle, Antoine de Berghes, Marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom, is all the autograph we have of this noble man of God; it is as follows: "I believe, Right Worshipful,



ARCHIVES
DU
ROYAUME DE BELGIQUE

AUTOGRAPH OF TYNDALE

that you are not ignorant of what has been determined concerning me [by the Council of Brabant]; therefore I entreat Your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that, if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods, which he has in his possession, a warmer cap; for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woolen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp at evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all I entreat and beseech Your Clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary that I may spend my time with that study. And, in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be

TYNDALE STRANGLED AND BURNED

consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen. W. Tindale."

James Masson, known as Latomus, who had attacked Erasmus and also Luther, writes: "When William Tyndale was in prison for Lutheranism, he wrote a book on the theme 'Faith Alone Justifies before God'; this he called his key to the healthy understanding of Sacred Scripture. We replied in three books" — rather mildly.

The doctors of Louvain had thanked Beaton for burning Patrick Hamilton in Scotland and promised "there shall be those among externe nations which shall imitate the same." Now they had the opportunity to imitate, and they used it. Tyndale was tried for heresy. "It is no great matter whether they that die on account of religion be guilty or innocent, provided we terrify the people by such examples; which generally succeeds best when persons eminent for learning, riches, nobility, or high station are thus sacrificed," said Ruwart Tapper,

Doctor of Theology, Chancellor of the University of Louvain, one of the judges, foremost among the accusers of Tyndale and most relentless in opposition to him.

"If they shall burn me, they shall do none other thing than that I look for," Tyndale had said long ago when they were burning his Bibles; "there is none other way into the kingdom of life than through persecution and suffering of pain and of very death, after the ensample of Christ."

On August 5 James de Lattre, inquisitor apostolic of the Low Countries, deeded his powers to Ruard Tapper. Soon after, Tyndale was degraded, likely in the usual manner. To the bishops seated on a high platform the victim was led, robed in his priestly vestments, and made to kneel. His hands were scraped as a symbol of the loss of the anointing oil; the bread and the wine were placed in his hands and then taken away; he was stripped of his vestments and clothed as a layman. The presiding bishop then turned him over to the secular officer.

The martyr sent a letter to Poyntz by the keeper of the castle, who warmly compared Tyndale's behavior in prison with that of the apostles.

Early in October, 1536, Tyndale was strangled to death, and then his body was burned. "He cried at the stake with a loud voice, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes!' "

Tyndale's dying prayer was heard. At the very time of the martyr's fiery death the first Bible printed on English soil came from the press, printed by the king's own patent printer Berthelet, or Godfrey. It was Tyndale's revised New Testament, with his prologs, and his name openly set forth on the title-page; it closed with the words: "God saue the Kynge and all his well-wyllers."

Tyndale fought a good fight; he finished his course; he kept the faith; he made good his vow: "I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest." When Bishop Stokesley of London sneered at the Word of God which every cobbler was reading in his mother tongue, Bishop Fox of Hereford replied, "The lay people do now know the Holy Scriptures better than many of us."

"Evil-favored in this world and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted" — is the picture

Tyndale paints of himself. Even if true, what of it? Fox calls him "the Apostle of England"; the *North American Review* considers him "the chief of the English reformers"; the *Christian Observer* says: "Few are adequately conscious what an imperishable debt of gratitude is due his memory"; the *British Quarterly* judges him "perhaps the greatest benefactor that our native country ever enjoyed"; Froude says his "epitaph is the Reformation."

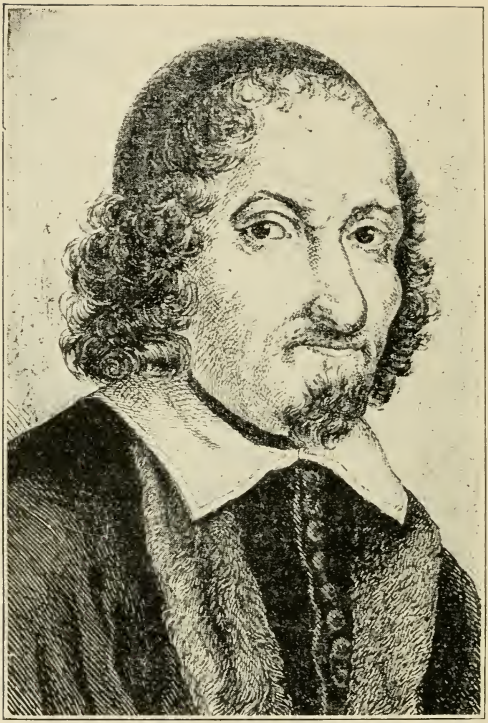
In 1866 his admiring countrymen reared to his memory a cross-crowned lofty and massive monument on Nibley Knoll in Gloucestershire, and in 1884 Lord Salisbury unveiled another by J. E. Boehm in the Thames Embankment Gardens, near Whitehall Court and in 1913 another was put up at Vilvorde with inscriptions in English, Latin, French, and Flemish, and he is honored in Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the literary grace of Tyndale's Bible is the proud boast of all the educated English-speaking world, "the most splendid literary monument of the genius of our native tongue," as H. W. Hoare writes.

CHAPTER FOUR

TYNDALE'S INFLUENCE

In 1535 or 1536 Miles Coverdale issued the *Biblia, Translated out of Douche and Latyn into English.* "He was especially indebted to Luther's Bible," says Professor Pattison; and again, "The influence of Luther is very apparent." At Cambridge University Coverdale attended the meetings at the White Horse, called "Germany," because of the Lutheran opinions held there. Later he was twice a Lutheran pastor at Bergzabern, in Zweibruecken, also the Bishop of Exeter. He had a considerable share in the introduction of German spiritual culture to English readers. The first hymns sung by Protestant Englishmen were the forty-one "Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songs" which Coverdale translated from Luther and others, in the original meter, so that they were sung to the original Lutheran melodies. Under Bloody Mary the book was forbidden, to the great loss of English hymnology, as Herford laments.

In 1537 Matthew's Bible appeared, Tyndale's Bible, with the untranslated portions

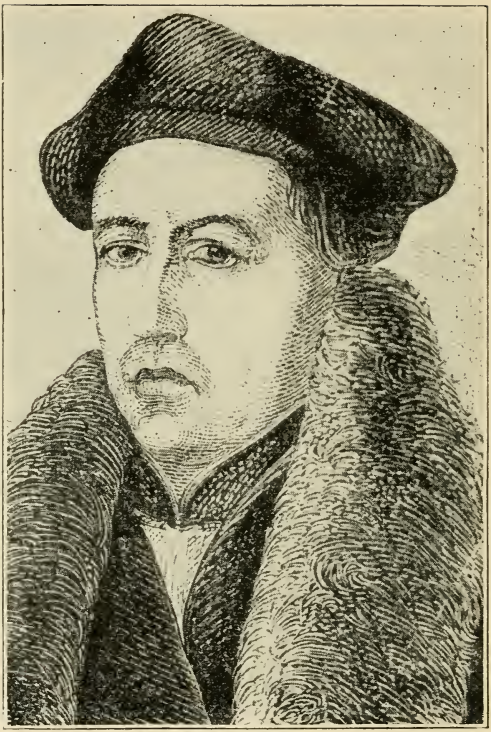


MILES COVERDALE, BISHOP OF EXETER

of his Old Testament pieced out with Coverdale's translation, done by John Rogers, chaplain to the merchant adventurers at Antwerp. About 1536 Rogers went to Wittenberg, matriculated on November 25, 1540, and was a pastor in Saxony. Hoare writes: "It is chiefly remarkable for the excessive Lutheranism of its annotation, in which it out-Tyndales Tyndale himself," and it has the "character of a Lutheran manifesto." Rogers was the first martyr under Bloody Mary, Monday, February 4, 1555, "he has been burned alive for being a Lutheran; but he died persisting in his opinion," wrote Count Noailles, the French ambassador in London.

Richard Taverner, a London lawyer, the translator of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, prepared a Bible, based on Matthew's, printed in London in two editions in 1539; it is prefaced by a manly dedication to the King.

The "Great Bible" appeared in 1539 — practically Tyndale's work; the martyr now triumphed gloriously. The "Great Bible" was presented by Coverdale to Archbishop Cranmer, who laid it before the King, who "authorized" it and had it set up in every

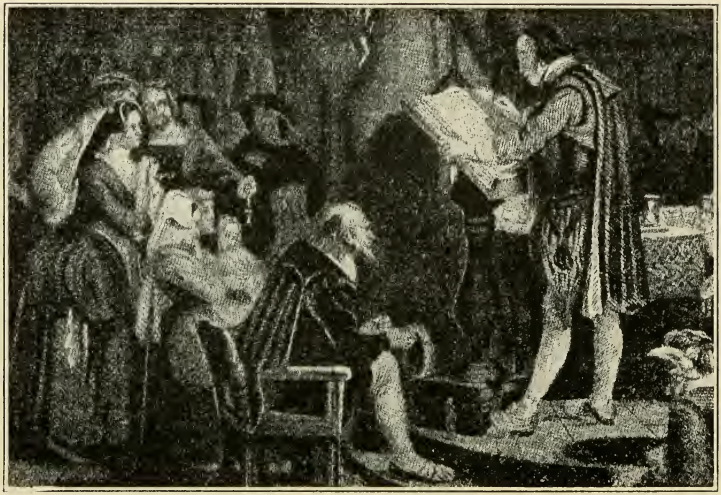


ARCHBISHOP CRANMER

church throughout the kingdom and commended by the clergy!

Bonner put six copies in St. Paul's and was sore distressed to find people persisted in reading them even during the public services while the preacher was declaring the Word of God. The title-page told that "it was oversene and perused at the commandement of the King's Highness by the ryghte reverende fathers in God, Cuthbert bishop of Duresme, and Nicholas bishop of Rochester." And who, think you, was this "Cuthbert of Duresme"? None other than Tunstal, the same Cuthbert who had refused to Tyndale a scholar's room, who had denounced and burned his Bible. This Cuthbert Tunstal officially recommended Tyndale's work! Tyndale did not live, labor, and die in vain!

During the six and a half years of the reign of Edward VI thirteen editions of Bibles and thirty-five of Testaments were published in England. The days of Bloody Mary were not good days for Protestants and Bibles. But when Elizabeth made her entry into London and arrived at "the Little Conduit in Chepe," she was presented with a Bible. "Raising it with both her hands, the Queen presses it to her lips, and then



By C. Harvey, R. S. A.

FIRST READING OF BIBLE IN ST. PAUL'S, 1541

laying it against her heart, amid the enthusiastic shouting of the multitudes, she gracefully thanks the city for so precious a gift."

Lord Bacon writes: "On the morrow of her coronation, it being the custom to release prisoners at the inauguration of a prince, . . . one of her courtiers . . . besought her with a loud voice, 'That now this good time there might be four or five principal prisoners more released; these were the four evangelists and the Apostle St. Paul, who had been long shut up in an unknown tongue, as it were in prison, so as they could not converse with the common people.' "

In 1560 came the Geneva Bible, with a dedication "to the most virtuous and noble Queen Elizabeth." For the first time Roman type was used, and the chapters were divided into verses. The monopoly of printing it Elizabeth granted to John Bodley, founder of the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford. Eighty editions appeared.

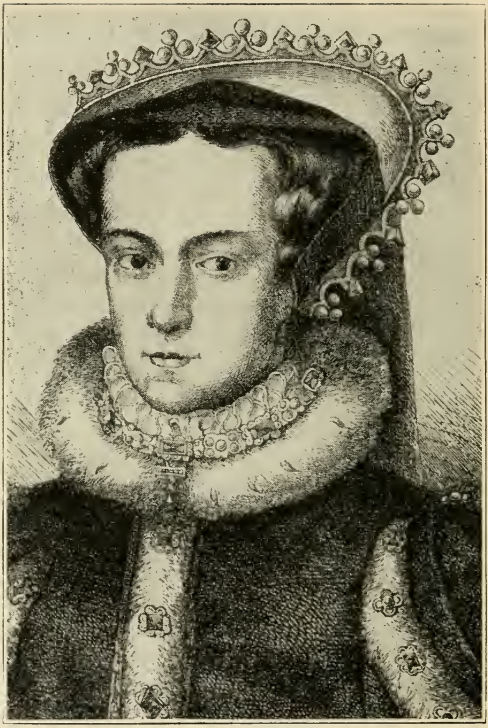
Archbishop Parker planned the Bishops' Bible of 1568 — "The influence of Tyndale is strongly felt," and of the notes it is said, "their sturdy Protestantism is often worthy of Luther himself."

In 1611 came the King James Version,

Holbein

EDWARD VI

practically Tyndale's Bible. The Roman Catholic scholar Alexander Geddes writes: "Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude and expressed with the greatest precision." The poet Rogers says: "Oh, the exquisite English of the Bible! I often feel as if the translators as well as the original writers must have been inspired." The historian John Richard Green says: "As a mere literary monument the English of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language." "In Tyndale's translation we find most of the strength as well as most of the sweetness of the Authorized Version. . . . There is a graphic simplicity about it which captures the ear at once. . . . The music of Tyndale's translation with equal ease rises to the stately majesty of a march or falls to the homelike sweetness of a mother's lullaby. The arrangement of words of some sentences is in itself triumphal." The Roman Catholic Faber writes: "Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is one of the great



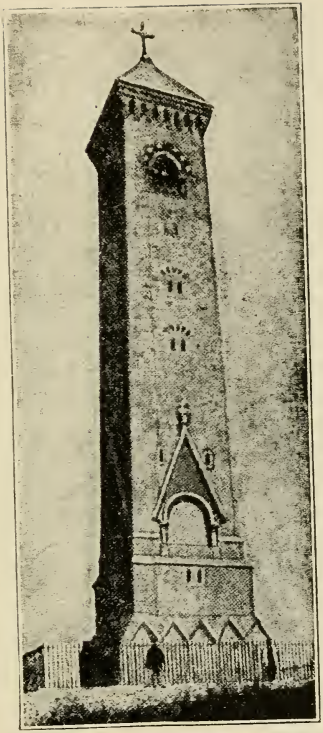
BLOODY MARY

QUEEN ELIZABETH

strongholds of heresy in our country? It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church-bells which the convert hardly knows how to forego. Its felicities seem to be things rather than words."

"Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius — if such a word may be permitted — which breathes through it, the mingled majesty and tenderness, the preternatural grandeur, the Saxon simplicity, unequaled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all are here and bear the impress of the mind of one man — William Tyndale," says Froude.

"From 1525 to 1884 the best Biblical scholarship of the English nation, not attempting to supersede Tyndale's work, has succeeded only in bringing a matchless work a little nearer perfection. Tyndale's influence in fixing the standard and exhibiting the noble possibilities of the English language has far exceeded that of any other writer. In his English New Testament Tyn-

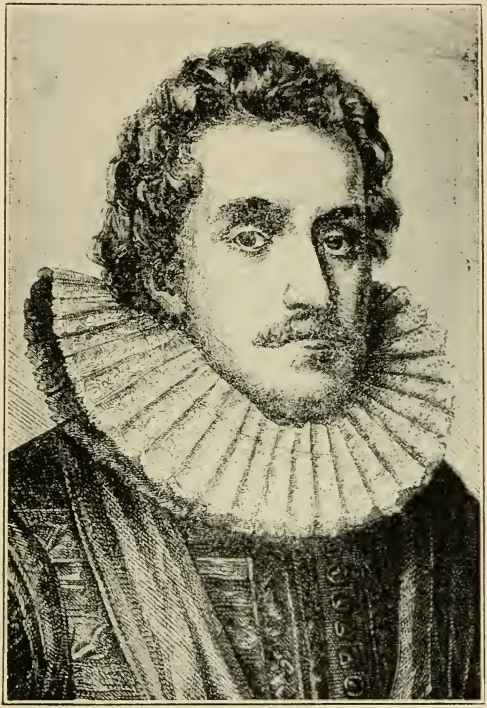


TYNDALE MONUMENT
NIBLEY KNOLL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

dale laid the 'grand foundation-stone of England's greatness' and conferred the greatest of all spiritual blessings on all English-speaking peoples."

"That Tyndale's English is decidedly superior to the writings of his time which have come down to us cannot be disputed; it is a noble translation, the basis of every subsequent English version, and on several accounts better than all subsequent versions; it has an individuality as pronounced as Luther's, its Saxon is racy and strong, sometimes majestic, and, above all things, it is hearty and true. The reader feels that the translator felt what he wrote, that his heart was in his work, and that he strove in prayer to reproduce in his own mother tongue to the very best of his ability what he believed to be the true sense of the Word of God as he understood it."

In our present Bible eighty per cent. of Tyndale has been retained in the Old Testament and ninety per cent. in the New, and in spite of many revisions almost every sentence is substantially the same as Tyndale wrote it. No greater tribute could be paid to his industry, scholarship, and genius. To him we owe the exceeding beauty and tender



JAMES I

STATUE OF TYNDALE IN LONDON

grace of the language of our present Bible. For felicity of diction and for dignity of rhythm, Tyndale never has been, and never can be, surpassed. George P. Marsh calls it "the first classic of our literature — the highest exemplar of purity and beauty of language existing in our speech. . . . When we study our Testaments, we are in most cases perusing the identical words penned by the martyr Tyndale nearly three hundred and fifty years ago."

Dore speaks of Tyndale's "strong Lutheran bias"; Bishop Marsh says: "His translation was taken at least in part from Luther's"; Cardinal Gasquet says: "Luther's direct influence may be detected on almost every page of the printed edition issued by Tyndale." McComb says: "Some of the happiest renderings in our English New Testament we owe indirectly to the German Reformer." Another writes: "Happily our own excellent translation of the Bible still retains striking evidence of the influence of his [Luther's] admirable version, and perhaps it is not too much to say that the two most copious and energetic languages are greatly indebted to him [Luther] for their terseness and expression."

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